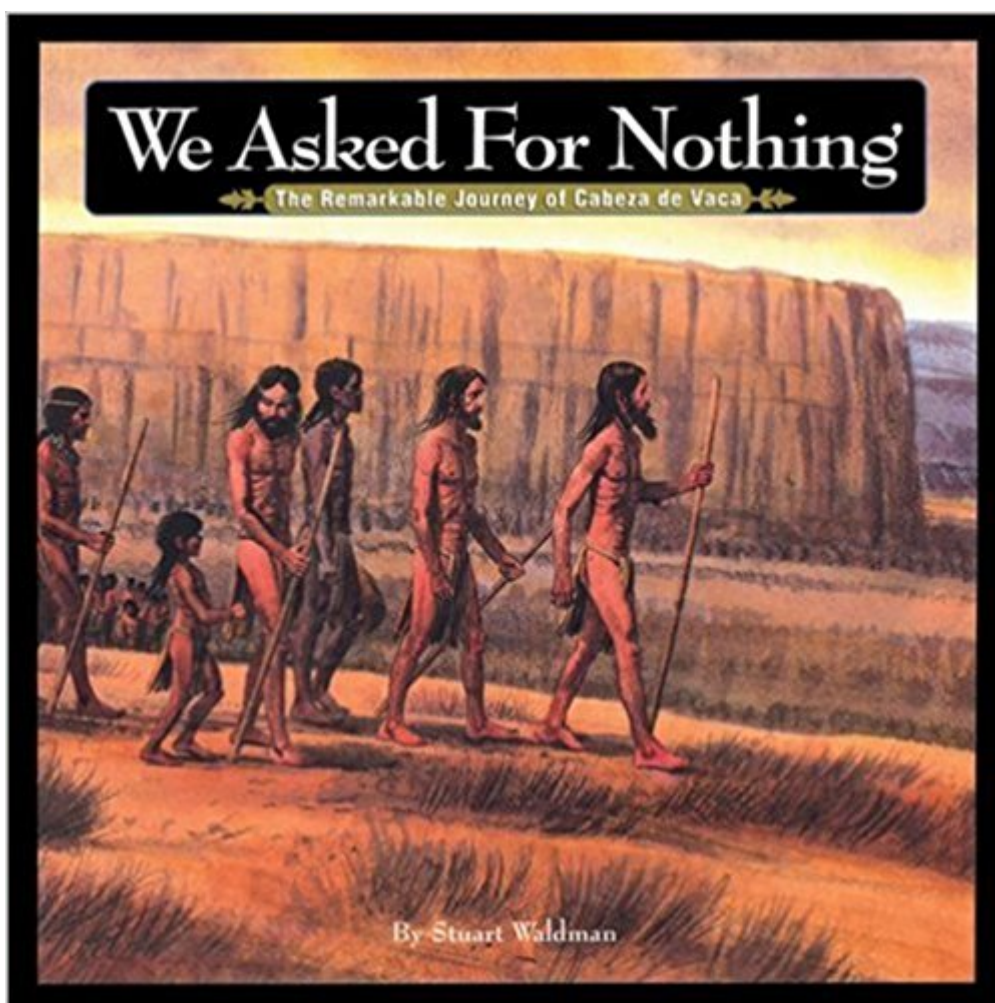


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# We Asked For Nothing: The Remarkable Journey Of Cabeza De Vaca (Great Explorers)



## Synopsis

The explorer who discovered his own humanity. In 1528, the conquistador Alvar Nunez Cabeza de Vaca escaped a hostile reception in Florida only to be shipwrecked off the coast of Texas. For the next eight years, he lived among the native tribes of the Southwest while he journeyed towards the safety of the Spanish settlements in Mexico. He and three companions survived starvation, sickness and slavery thanks to the generosity of native peoples along the way. When Cabeza de Vaca finally reached the Spanish, he was a changed man and led the struggle against the feudal-like exploitation of the New World populations. Stuart Waldman tells the fascinating story of two journeys: one covering 2,500 miles through unexplored territory, the other the transformation of a man's heart. Excerpts from Cabeza de Vaca's journals make the reader's immersion into this mystifying world complete. The gatefold map allows the reader to follow the journey while reading.

## Book Information

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Age Range: 9 - 13 years

Grade Level: 4 - 8

## Customer Reviews

Grade 5-8--Conquistador Alvar N  f  ez Cabeza de Vaca and his men were shipwrecked on an island off the shore of Texas in 1528. Seeing how emaciated the Spaniards were, local Indians brought them food and water and cared for them. Cabeza de Vaca lived among the native tribes in

the southwest for eight years, as he and three others walked toward the Spanish settlements in what today is Mexico. Enduring starvation, illness, and enslavement, they survived largely through the kindness of the Indians they met along the way. When the explorer finally reached the Spanish settlers, he tried to change their feudal-like treatment of indigenous people. Waldman's recounting is engaging, straightforward, and clear. Much of the text is based on Cabeza de Vaca's writings, which are frequently quoted in boxed insets, greatly enhancing readers' understanding of events. An epilogue explains what happened to the individuals mentioned in the narrative. A foldout map traces the journey on sea and land. McNeely's full- and double-page paintings capture the landscapes better than the people, who often look stiff. Most of the men's facial expressions appear as grimaces, and do not effectively portray their emotions. An absorbing story of adventure and self-discovery.--Peg Glisson, Mendon Center Elementary School, Pittsford, NY Copyright © Reed Business Information, a division of Reed Elsevier Inc. All rights reserved.

IRA Children's Book Award Notable Book (International Reading Association)Notable Children's Book in the Field of Social Studies for 2004 (National Council for the Social Studies and The Ch)Design is clean and inviting... gracefully ornamented sidebar quotations... fold-out map that can be easily accessed while reading. (Bulletin of the Center for Children's Books)Engaging, straightforward, and clear... an absorbing story of adventure and self-discovery. (Peg Glisson School Library Journal)Incredible survival saga... [Waldman's] compelling tale of Europeans walking through an ancient world before it was irrevocably changed should be essential reading for all students of American history. (Judy Green The Sacramento Bee 2004-10-17)

Before reading this book, I had never heard of Cabeza de Vaca. His story is one of the few about a European explorer who found the heart and soul of the people of the New World (basically Mexico) and he never betrayed them.De Vaca came to the New World in search of gold, even though King Charles V charged him with making certain the indigenous people were being treated properly. Various circumstances brought him & his shipmates to the point where they were near starvation and had to put the ship ashore. The area on which they landed was populated by the Karankawa Indians. The tribe's people treated them with great kindness.Through this experience (and others like it), de Vaca came to love and respect the people of the various tribes he encountered as his equals. He experienced the ultimate paradigm shift. He no longer thought as a European and Spaniard when dealing with the people of the New World. He regarded them not as savages beneath his rank, but as a fellow human beings. For that time period, this was an amazing change

of heart and mind:"Like all people, some were good, some were evil, some were cruel, some were kind, but there was one thing of which Cabeza de Vaca was now certain: Indians were human beings, children of God, and not animals to be bought and sold." (p. 36)De Vaca and his men became know as healers and they became famous among the tribes inhabiting Mexico. Where ever they traveled they were asked to heal and the indigenous people attested to their abilities to do so. This exciting narrative will inspire children and adults to learn more about this European explorer who, although entirely human, broke the mold of his day.

There's not much too add to the great reviews already posted, but I wanted to give it another 5 stars rating. As a Catholic home schooling family, we try to find books like this: accurate history, in-depth coverage, beautiful illustrations, and agenda-less. Imagine an author actually writing about a kind conquistador, who healed the native peoples by making the sign of the cross on their foreheads and praying. We also enjoyed the book on Henry Hudson in this series and look forward to reading the one on Vasco de Gama.

Alvar Nunez Cabeza de Vaca arrived in Florida as the Treasurer of an expedition of Spanish Conquistadores. Through bad luck and folly, he ended up on an epic nine year journey that took him Tampa Bay Florida to Sonora, Mexico. Cabeza de Vaca long trek is a story of great suffering, persistence and personal redemption. His transformation for a callow would be conqueror to a man of great depth and feeling is both remarkable and inspiring. This book is part of the Mikaya Press, "Great Explorers" series. I have read a number of books in the series and they have all been well written and a pleasure to read. Yet, of all the great figures written about in this series, Cabeza de Vaca is my favorite. The story of an accidental explorer feels the most modern and relevant. Highly recommended.

We Asked for Nothing is a picture book written at a fifth grade reading level or above. It deals with serious issues such as racism, prejudice, slavery, starvation, religious faith and survival. I felt very comfortable reading it side by side with my first grade son in a Guided Reading context, but it wouldn't be appropriate to just hand this book over to an advanced six year old and say "Have at it." Discussing the material is key. A nice feature of the book is that quotes from Cabeza de Vaca's original text are inserted throughout the story, so that children get a chance to experience the primary source. The illustrations in this book are beautiful, and I can't help but wonder if I would have remembered what I read back in college better if I had also had access to the children's version of

Cabeza de Vaca's story! If you are from Texas or the Gulf Coast *We Asked for Nothing* would be even more meaningful for you because it talks extensively about the Native American tribes who lived in that area. All of those peoples were unfamiliar to me: the Karankawa, the Queuene, the Chorrucó, the Deaguane, the Mendica etc., I had never learning anything about them before. Neither had the Spanish Conquistadors, until Cabeza de Vaca had the courage to find out. Unfortunately, I believe that *We Asked for Nothing* is now out of print. I had to order my copy as a discarded library book. It's worth taking the effort to acquire this book either through borrowing it from your own library or ordering it used if you are at all interested in the history of Explorers or Native Americans. *We Asked for Nothing* really solidified a lot my son learned from listening to Susan Wise Bauer's *Story of the World* series.

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